



Lahontan Reservoir brimming as irrigation season drawing to a close

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Nevada Appeal News Service
October 25, 2005

With cooler weather creeping in, the irrigation season for the Truckee-Carson Irrigation District is coming to an end.

At 124,872 acre-feet on Thursday, Lahontan Reservoir is clearly ahead of storage from the year before, which was measured at 78,104 acre-feet. Irrigation District representatives have targeted Nov. 15 as the end of this year's season.

Truckee-Carson Irrigation District Engineer Dave Overvold said with this year's storage obviously much bigger than it was last year, he anticipates a good outlook for the 2006 season.

"The outlook for next year is pretty good," Overvold said. "As far as full allocations go, we won't know that for sure until maybe March or so when we get a good idea of how much snowpack we've already accumulated. But at least our carryover is going to be pretty decent."

Overvold said because of the unusually high amount of storage this year, the irrigation district will not have a need to divert water from the Truckee River.

Like in March, it appears as if water users could be enjoying another strong beginning to the 2006 season with the amount of carryover from this year.

Lahontan Reservoir was high as 4,162 feet in July - only 2 feet away from the top of flashboards that control spillover. Beaches and shorelines were flooded during the summer months as the lake was noticeably fuller than in years past because of the winter snowfall.

That's contributed to this year's high level of acre-feet, 30,000 of which Overvold said is a "credit" storage.

"We have accumulated a credit in Lahontan that floats on top of the maximum storage levels," Overvold said. "That's one of the reasons why we have so much more water up there than previous years. We've been accumulating a larger and larger credit. For each year that we've exceeded the efficiency credit, we get an incentive credit. Right now the total is 30,000. So of that storage up there, 30,000 of it is credit storage."

With a little more than two weeks left in the district's irrigation season, Overvold said activity has noticeably dropped to the point that only governmental wildlife agencies are addressing any substantial irrigation needs.

"It's slowed down a little bit," Overvold said. "The biggest water users now are the Fish and Wildlife Service and the Nevada Department of Wildlife."

The last day to order water from the district is Nov. 10 by 4 p.m.

[BACK](#) 